

The POLITICK WIFE:

O R,

The Devil Outwitted by a Woman.



OF all the plagues upon the earth,
That e'er poor man befall,
It's hunger and a scolding wife,
These are the worst of all.
There was a poor man in our country,
Of a poor and low degree,
And with both these plagues he was troubled,
And the worst of luck had he.

He had seven childreu by one wife,
And the times were poor and hard,
And his poor toil was grown so bad,
He scarce could get him bread.
Being discontented in his mind,
One day his house he left,
And wandering down by a forest side,
Of his senses was quite bereft.

As he was wandering up-and-down,
Betwixt hopes and despair,
The Devil started out of a bush,
And appeared unto him there.

O what is the matter, the Devil he said,
You look so discontent;
Sure you want money to buy you some bread,
Or to pay your landlord's rent.

Indeed, kind sir, you read me right,
And the grounds of my disease.
Then what is your name, said the poor man?
Pray tell me if you please.
My name is Dumkin the Devil, quoth he,
And the truth to you I do tell,
Altho' you see me wandering here,
Yet my dwelling it is in Hell.

Then what will you give me, said the Devil,
To ease you of your want,
And you shall have corn and cattle enough,
And never partake of scant?
I have nothing to give you, said the poor man,
Nor nothing here in hand:
But all the service that I can do,
Shall be at your command.

Then upon the condition of seven long years,
A bargain with you I will frame,
You shall bring me a beast unto this place,
That I cannot tell its name:
But if I tell its name full right,
Then mark what to you I tell,
Then you must go along with me,
Directly unto Hell.

This poor man he went joyfully home,
And thrifty he grew therefore;
For he had corn and cattle enough,
And every thing good store.
His neighbours, who did live him round,
Did wonder at him much,
And thought that he had robb'd or stole,
He was grown so wondrous rich.

Then for the space of seven long years,
He lived in good cheer, |
When the time of his indenture grew near,
And he began to fear.
O what is the matter, said his wife,
You look so discontent?
Sure you have got some maid with child,
And now you begin to repent.

Indeed, kind wife, you read me wrong,
To censure so hard of me.
Was it for getting a maid with child,
That would be no felony.
But I have made a league with the Devil,
For seven long years or more.
That I should have corn and cattle enough,
And every thing good store.

Then for the space of seven long years,
A bargain I did frame,
I should bring him a beast unto that place,
He could not tell his name:
But if he tells his name full right,
Then mark what to you I tell,
Then I must go along with him,
Directly unto Hell.

Go get you gone, you silly old man,
Your cattle go tend and feed;
For a woman's wit is far better than man's,
If used in time of need:
Go fetch me down all the birdlime thou hast,
And lay it all on the floor,
When I have pulled my cloaths all off,
You shall anoint me all o'er.

But when he had anointed her,
From the head unto the heel;
Zounds, said the poor man, methinks you look
Just like to the very De'el;
Go fetch me down all the feathers thou hast,
And lay them down by me,
And I will rowl myself therein,
'Till never a place go free.

Come tie a string about my neck,
Lead me forwards to this place,
And I will save you from the Devil,
If I have but so much grace.
The Devil he stood roaring out,
And look'd both fierce and bold:
Thou hast brought me a beast unto this place,
And the bargain thou dost hold.

Come shew me the face of this beast, said the Devil,
Come shew it me in a short space:
Then he shew'd to him his wife's buttocks,
And swore it was her face.
She has monstrous cheeks, the Devil he said,
And her visage is wondrous grim,
She has but one eye in all her whole head,
And methinks it looks wondrous grim.

Come shew me the mouth of this beast, said the Devil,
Come shew it me speedily.
Zounds, said the poor man, if you're not blind,
'Tis an inch just under her eye.
And if she stood upon all fours,
As now she stands at length,
You'd take her to be some monstrous beast,
Taken by man's main strength.

How many more of these beasts, said the Devil,
How many more of the kind?
I have seven more, said the poor man,
But have left them all behind.
If you have seven more of these beasts, said the Devil,
The truth unto you I tell,
You have beasts enough for to cheat me,
And all the Devils in Hell.

Here take thy bond and indenture both,
I'll have nothing to do with thee;
So the man and his wife went joyfully home,
And lived full merrily.
O God send us good merry long lives,
Without any sorrow or woe,
And here's a health to all such wives,
Who can cheat the Devil so.

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